

SPEECHES
ON THE
CONFEDERATION

OF THE
British North American Provinces,

DELIVERED IN THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,

ON THE 9TH AND 10TH DAYS OF MARCH, 1865,

BY

DAVID FORD JONES, ESQ.,

MEMBER FOR LEEDS (SOUTH RIDING);

AND

WALTER SHANLY, ESQ.,

MEMBER FOR GRENVILLE (SOUTH RIDING).

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CONFEDERATION

OF THE

BRITISH NORTH AMERICAN PROVINCES.

SPEECH BY MR. D. FORD JONES, DELIVERED MARCH 9, 1865.

Mr. D. FORD JONES resumed the adjourned debate. He said—I rise, Mr. SPEAKER, to address the House on the resolutions which you hold in your hand in favor of a Confederation of all the Provinces of British North America. I feel that the question is one involving such very great interests, involving a change in the whole constitution of the country, and involving consequences which may plunge us into great difficulties, or which may have the very opposite effect—that I feel great diffidence and embarrassment in approaching it. But I feel it is a duty I owe to myself and to those who sent me here, that I should express my opinions on this proposed union, before I record my vote on the resolutions now before the House. I desire to do this, because I cannot give my approval to the whole scheme, some of its details being such that I cannot support them.

HON. MR. HOLTON—Hear, hear.

MR. JONES—The way in which I look at this question does not at all depend on whether this hon. gentleman or that hon. gentleman may be at the head of affairs in this country; or whether we may have a Coalition Government or a purely party Government; but I consider we should look at the scheme on its own merits, and deal with it as a whole, giving a fair and square vote on the resolutions as a whole. (Hear, hear.) I think, therefore, that the course which has been taken by the Government to obtain such vote is the wise and honest course. (Hear, hear.) I think they deserve credit for the step they have taken with a view to bringing this debate to a close. We have been debating this question day after day for a number of weeks, and I must say that the opposition given by hon. gentlemen on the other side has been of a very factious character; time after time they have risen

to make motions on this, that, and the other thing, keeping the House from addressing itself to the matter really under debate, and protracting unnecessarily the decision of the question. Only the night before last, when an hon. gentleman had risen for the purpose of addressing the House, they cried out that he was too late, and called for an adjournment of the debate; and yet, when it was agreed to, they wasted two or three hours in moving additions to that motion for adjournment. This was done, too, by hon. gentlemen who were well conversant with the rules of this House, and who must have known that these motions were not in order. At midnight they were too tired to allow the debate to go on, and yet they kept the House sitting after that till three in the morning, discussing mere points of order. (Hear, hear.) That has been the course pursued by hon. gentlemen opposite. And what, on the other hand, has been the course pursued by the Administration? Did they not put a motion on the notice paper—a motion which the factiousness of hon. gentlemen opposite prevented from being put to the vote—to give further time for the discussion of this question, by resolving that instead of its being taken up at half-past seven, it should be taken up at three, the whole time of the House being devoted to it? We have been debating the question for weeks, and though hon. gentlemen opposite have been in their places, they have not proposed a single amendment. And yet, after this had gone on for such a length of time, so soon as the “previous question” is moved, those hon. gentlemen get up and cry out that they are gagged. Even after the House began to discuss the question at three o’clock, these hon. gentlemen day after day wasted the time by getting in one side-wind after another, in order to create

delay, to see if something might not turn up against the scheme. Now, at last, they have got something. Something has turned up in New Brunswick, and I suppose they will now permit us to come to a vote. (Hear, hear.) In discussing this question, I do not see any necessity for going back eight or ten years to the speeches of hon. members. I do not see why lengthy extracts should be read to show that the hon. member for Montmorency opposed the union of the provinces in 1858, or that the hon. member for Hochelaga, at that time, was in favor of it. I do not see what that has to do with the question before us. It is now submitted in a practical form for our decision, and what we have to do is to give a square vote, yea or nay, that we are in favor of this Confederation, or that we are against it. Our circumstances have changed within the last few years; but it is not on that account merely that I now support this union. I have always, upon every occasion, on the hustings, at public meetings and elsewhere, advocated a union of the British North American Provinces; and were our relations with the United States in the same favorable form that existed some five or six years since, I would still give my support to a union. It is, therefore, sir, not because I think there is a great present necessity for the scheme being brought to a speedy conclusion that I now support it. That present necessity, however, now exists, and I do not see why other hon. gentlemen, after a lapse of five or six years, when times have changed, and a greater urgency has arisen for such a union, should not be allowed to change their minds. "Wise men change their minds; fools have no minds to change." (Hear, hear.) Shortly before the meeting of this House, I advertised that I would hold a series of meetings in the Riding of South Leeds, for the purpose of placing my views upon this question before my constituents, and to see whether their views accorded with my own; men of all shades of politics were requested to attend these meetings, and they were very numerous and respectably attended, not only by those who supported me, but also by those who were my most bitter opponents at the last election. And at all of those meetings, some six or seven, not a single voice was raised against the union of these provinces with the Provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, and Prince Edward Island. All appeared to think such a union advisable

and necessary, not only for commercial purposes, but because it would tend to strengthen the ties that bound us to the Mother Country. It has been said that this union has never been before the people, that it has never been a test question at the polls. Now, sir, so long ago as the year 1826, this union was advocated by Sir JOHN BEVERLEY ROBINSON, one of the most able men this country has ever produced; subsequently, on different occasions, it was adverted to by Lord DURHAM in his celebrated report—also by the British American League, presided over by the late lamented Hon. GEO. MOFFATT, of Montreal, and latterly in that despatch to the home Government, in October, 1858, over the signatures of the Hon. Messrs. CARTIER, GALT and ROSS. Why action was not taken upon that despatch, I cannot say; I leave this matter in the hands of those who at that time administered the affairs of this country, and who are responsible for the course they pursued in allowing it to be dropped. Sir, the union of these provinces would, in my humble opinion, be of the very greatest advantage to us in many points. It would strengthen, and not weaken, as has been said by its opponents, the ties that bind us to the Mother Country. It would give us a standing in the eyes of the world. Instead of being several small, disjointed and fragmentary provinces, as was so ably expressed in the Speech from the Throne, we would form one great nationality, with a population to begin with of nearly 4,000,000 people, which would place us among the list of the first countries of the world. (Hear, hear.) It would tend to strengthen our securities both here and in the Mother Country. Instead of our stocks and our bonds being quoted as if by accident on the Stock Exchange in London, they would be looked for daily, and sought after. It would give us an increased market for our produce and our manufactures, and it would tend more than anything else to cause a tide of emigration to flow to our shores. (Hear, hear.) Now the emigrant in coming to America is perplexed to know to which of the different provinces he shall go, and when he speaks of going to America, the only place he thinks of is New York. It would create a daily line of steamships from the different points of Europe to Halifax, the nearest point and shortest sea voyage to this country—and with the Intercolonial Railway to bring the emigrant directly through to Canada, who will say that we

shall not have a tide of emigration to our shores such as we can scarcely imagine? The only emigration we now have is that induced to come by friends who have made this country a home and have prospered. These, sir, are the reasons, from a political point of view, why I support the resolutions now in your hand. And, sir, in speaking in a commercial sense, and as a commercial man, they shall also have my full and hearty support. (Hear, hear.) Does any one pretend to say that by the addition of nearly a million of inhabitants to these provinces, a thrifty and intelligent people, that this country will not be made more prosperous? Does any one pretend to say, that by taking away the barriers that exist to trade, with a million of people living close alongside of us, that this country will not be advanced? Will we not have largely-increased markets for our manufactures when those hostile tariffs that now meet us at every port in the Maritime Provinces, restricting our trade with them, are removed? Will we not have an increased market for our produce when we are linked together by the Intercolonial Railroad, and when a free interchange of all our commodities exists? Can we remain, as at present, without any highway of our own to the Atlantic, for ingress or egress, for five months of the year? (Hear, hear.) When we see the hostility existing towards us, and forcibly shown towards us, by the press, the people, and the Government of the United States, by the enforcement of the obnoxious passport system, by the notice or the abrogation of the Reciprocity treaty, by the annulling of the bonding system, by the notice given to the Government of Great Britain that the treaty regarding armed vessels on our lakes is to be done away with—when our farmers cannot send their produce for five months of the year to a market; when our merchants, for the same period, cannot get their stocks of merchandise for the supply of the wants of the country; when we are dependent on the generosity of a foreign country even for the passage of our mails to Old England—when that is our position, shall it be said that this union with the Lower Provinces is not desirable, and that we shall not, as soon as possible, have a railroad across our territory to the Atlantic seaboard, to Halifax, one of the best harbors in the world? Shall we be indebted, be subservient to, be at the mercy of a foreign country for our very existence? (Hear, hear.) Sir, shall

we remain dependent upon that country for all these things, or shall we not rather put our own shoulders to the wheel, throwing off our supineness and inertia, and by building the Intercolonial Railway, provide an outlet for ourselves? (Hear, hear.) And simultaneously with the construction of that great work, I hold that for the benefit of the commercial interests of the country, we ought to enlarge and deepen our canals. (Hear, hear.) I desire now to read a Minute of the Executive Council, issued by the SANDFIELD MACDONALD-DORION Government, under date 19th February, 1864. It is as follows:—

Although no formal action, indicative of the strength of the party hostile to the continuance of the Reciprocity treaty, has yet taken place, information of an authentic character, as to the opinions and purposes of influential public men in the United States, has forced upon the committee the conviction that there is imminent danger of its speedy abrogation, unless prompt and vigorous steps be taken by Her Majesty's Imperial advisers to avert what would be generally regarded by the people of Canada as a great calamity.

And in another place it is stated:—

Under the beneficent operation of the system of self-government, which the later policy of the Mother Country has accorded to Canada, in common with the other colonies possessing representative institutions, combined with the advantages secured by the Reciprocity treaty of an unrestricted commerce with our nearest neighbors in the natural productions of the two countries, all agitation for organic changes has ceased, all dissatisfaction with the existing political relations of the province has wholly disappeared.

From this Minute it appears to have been the opinion of the SANDFIELD MACDONALD-DORION Government that the abrogation of the Reciprocity treaty would probably be a great calamity to this country. But I am not of that opinion, and I believe that the people of this country will never be so reduced as to go on their knees to pray the Government of the United States to continue the treaty. (Hear, hear.) Indeed, for the past year or two, in consequence of the difference in the currency between the two countries, we have felt almost as though that treaty had been put an end to already. In consequence of the state of the currency, many of the best interests of this country have been injured, the mining interest of the province has been put a stop to, and the lumbering interest, one of the most important of our many important interests, crippled

and paralysed. (Hear.) What much greater injury can befall us, by the abrogation of the Reciprocity treaty, than that we now suffer through the derangement of the currency? Instead of the repeal of the Reciprocity treaty being a great calamity, it will lead to an agitation for organic changes which cannot fail to be of the greatest advantages to the future prosperity of the country. For my part I do not at all like the idea of a document of that kind, emanating from our Canadian Government, falling into the hands of the American people, and leading them to believe that in our estimation the repeal by them of the Reciprocity treaty would be calamitous to this country. (Hear, hear.) I repeat that I do not believe that the abrogation of that treaty will eventually be detrimental to our interests. It is true that we may suffer for four or five years, and suffer greatly, but we will be thrown upon our own resources, and ultimately become strong and self-reliant. Our merchants will no longer be denied an outlet to the ocean during five or six months in the year, except by the favor of forbearance of our Yankee neighbors. Let us put our hands in our pockets to build this Intercolonial Railway, and we will be opening a way to the ocean to our merchants and our farmers for shipping their products over their own territory. And when we are in that position, we shall be able to say to the people of the United States—"You shall no longer be allowed to participate in the benefits of our fisheries—we will close the navigation of our canals against you—and we will cease to permit, without the payment of a heavy duty, the importation into this country of your coarse grains for the supply of our distillers and brewers." And, sir, when it is stated that the importations of these grains have amounted to nearly two millions of bushels annually, it will be seen that after all the reciprocity is not altogether on one side. (Hear, hear.) I think that they will then acknowledge it will be better for them to be on more friendly terms with this province, seeing that we control the navigation of the Welland and St. Lawrence canals, the natural outlet for the products of the Western States, which in 1863, amounted to the enormous quantity of five hundred and twenty million bushels of grain—they will be dependent upon us, instead of our relying upon them. Compared with the St. Lawrence navigation the Erie canal is but a ditch, and it is closed by the frost earlier in the season than our lake and

river navigation. When all these advantages which we enjoy are considered, the people of the United States will see how much better it is to be on terms of friendship and amity with us, instead of, to use a vulgar but forcible phrase, "cutting off their nose to spite their face." (Hear, hear.) With regard to the proposed resolutions, I stated at the outset that there were portions of the scheme to which I objected, and I may now, sir, be allowed briefly to advert to them. I would prefer that the whole power was concentrated under one head by a Legislative union, rather than a Federal union. I fear that the machinery will be complex, and that we will find, under the proposed system, that the expenses of the Government will be much greater than if we had one General Government without these additions of local legislatures for each of the provinces. (Hear, hear.) But I am happy to say that the proposed Federal system is not a reflex of the old Federal union of the United States. Notwithstanding, some honorable gentlemen have praised the Federal system in the States as worthy of imitation, still I think our proposed system much to be preferred. It differs in this—the United States Federal system was formed from a number of sovereign states, with sovereign powers, delegating to a central power just as much or as little of their power as they chose; thereby the doctrine of state rights obtained, and, as we have seen within the last four years, has been the cause of bloodshed and civil war, it may be to the probable destruction of that Federal union. Our case is exactly the reverse. Instead of the Central Government receiving its power from the different provinces, it gives to those provinces just as much or as little as it chooses. Hear what the 45th resolution says—"In regard to all subjects in which jurisdiction belongs to both the general and local legislatures, the laws or the General Parliament shall control and supersede those made by the local legislatures, and the latter shall be void so far as inconsistent with the former." This places the whole control in the hands of the General Government, making the union as nearly legislative as the circumstances of the various provinces would admit. So much is this the case that the hon. member for Hochelaga fears that it would eventually result in a legislative union—a result to my mind most devoutly to be desired. (Hear, hear.) There are two or three more of the points of the resolutions to which I have

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objection. The public lands are placed at the disposal of the local legislatures; immigration also is in the hands of the local legislatures, and the sea coast fisheries are in the hands of the local legislatures. These are matters common to the whole, and should, for many reasons, be under the control of the General Government. These various interests, however, are all covered by the 45th resolution of the Conference which I have just read, and which declares that when consistent with the welfare of the General Government, their control will be taken from the local legislatures. (Hear, hear.) I have, as briefly as possible, shown that in my opinion, in our political and our commercial relations we would be benefited by the union of Canada with the Maritime Provinces. I have also adverted briefly to the objections which I hold to the proposed mode of carrying out the union. I shall now endeavor to show that as a means of defence it is highly desirable. If there is one thing more desirable than another, it is to have the whole forces of the country under one governing power. How might it fare with us, in case of war or invasion, with the provinces disunited? Objections could now be made against the withdrawal of a portion of the militia from one province to the others, without the consent of the government of that province, and before they could be brought into the field, valuable time would be lost, red-tapeism would stand in the way, and the delay might be dangerous. (Hear, hear.) By being united and controlled under one head, troops could be thrown upon any point attacked, at a moment's notice. Objections have been made by hon. gentlemen to any expenditure for the purpose of building fortifications, at proper points, for the defence of the country; but I am satisfied there is no reasonable sum that may be required that will be grudged by the people of Canada; for if there is any purpose for which they will contribute cheerfully, it is for the defence of their country, and to continue the connection and cement the tie that binds us to the Mother Country. (Hear, hear.) It has been also stated that we could not defend ourselves against an overwhelming power such as the United States. Time was when we did defend ourselves, and that successfully; and if the time should ever come again, the people of Canada and of the Maritime Provinces will not be found backward to defend everything they hold sacred and most dear. (Hear, hear.) It has also been said that we should keep a

strict neutrality; in fact that our neutrality should be guaranteed by England, France and the United States, in case war should unfortunately take place between them. But such an idea is too absurd to be considered for a moment. Would the people of this country submit to such an arrangement even if attempted to be carried out? Would we allow England, if forced to go to war with the United States, want the assistance of her Canadian subjects? Could we restrain the people of Canada from doing their duty, when they saw the Mother Country battling with her foes? If I thought such would be the case, I should deny my country, for we should be held up to the scorn and derision of the world. (Hear, hear.) On the question of our defences, I desire to read an extract from the report of Col. JERVOIS, the able engineer sent out to report upon the practicability of defending Canada against attack:—

The question appears to be whether the British force now in Canada shall be withdrawn in order to avoid the risk of its defeat, or whether the necessary measure shall be taken to enable that force to be of use for the defence of the country. The sum required for the construction of the proposed works and armaments at Montreal and Quebec would only be about one year's expense of the regular force we now maintain in Canada. It is a delusion to suppose that force can be of any use for the defence of the country, without fortifications to compensate for the comparative smallness of its numbers. Even when aided by the whole of the local militia that could at present be made available, it would, in the event of war, be obliged to retreat before the superior numbers by which it would be attacked, and it would be fortunate if it succeeded in embarking at Quebec, and putting to sea without serious defeat. On the other hand, if the works now recommended be constructed, the vital points of the country could be defended, and the regular army would become a nucleus and support, round which the people of Canada would rally to resist aggression, and to preserve that connection with the Mother Country which their loyalty, their interests, and their love of true freedom alike make them desirous to maintain.

Such is the report of Col. JERVOIS, one of the ablest men on those subjects in the English service, and I think it can with greater reason be relied upon than all the mere assertions of hon. members, who are not supposed to know much, if anything at all, upon a subject which they have never made a study, and upon which they have had no experience whatever. (Hear, hear.) Sir J. WALSH also, a few days since, in a speech upon an Address to Her Majesty for papers and correspondence with the American Government

in relation to the Reciprocity treaty, and the notice for a finality of the treaty restricting the number of armed steamers upon our inland waters, spoke thus:—

There might be some hon. gentlemen who would contemplate, without shame or regret, the total and entire severance of the connection between England and Canada, and who would say that this country would get rid thereby of a source of much embarrassment, expense and trouble. He would, however, tell those hon. gentlemen that Great Britain could not, if she would, cut Canada adrift. As long as Canada retained her desire to be connected with this country—as long as Canada preserved her spirit and her resolution to be independent of America, so long would England be bound by her honor, by her interests, and by every motive that could instigate a generous or patriotic nation, to sustain, protect and vindicate the rights of Canada, and to guard her, whether as an ally or a dependency, against the aggressions of the United States; it was impossible for England to shrink from the obligation. The day might come when the Chancellor of the Exchequer would come down, and in happy phase and with mellifluous eloquence, congratulate the House upon having emancipated itself from a source of military expenditure. He might felicitate the House that Birmingham was sending admirably finished Armstrong and Whitworth guns to arm the new naval forces of America on the Canadian lakes. He might congratulate the House that Birmingham was sending out a plentiful supply of fetters and handcuffs to be used in coercing the refractory Americans. The right hon. gentleman might, at the same time, be able to congratulate the House upon a vast amount of commercial prosperity, and announce that he was able to reduce the income tax a penny or two pence on the pound. But if ever that day should come, and if ever that speech were made, the whole world would observe that the old English oak

was not only withered in its limbs, but was rotten at its heart. There was, in fact, no escape from the obligation which bound Great Britain, by every tie of national honor and interest, to maintain and defend Canada. The question was not one merely between England and Canada, but was one between England and the United States. It appeared to him that the notice given by the American Government was an act of such unmistakable hostility, that it almost amounted to a declaration of war, and at a much earlier period of our history, it would have been so regarded.

When such views are held in England, when so strong a desire is manifested in Canada to maintain our connection with England, and to remain under the sheltering folds of that flag we love so well, shall it be said that we have not the spirit left to defend ourselves? I know, sir, that the people of Canada will not be backward, should ever that time arrive. I feel that there is some of the spirit of 1812 still left among us. I am convinced that the blood of those men who left the United States, when they gained their independence, and who gave up all in order to live under the protection of the laws of Old England—the blood of those old U. E. Loyalists, I say, still courses through our veins. (Hear.) Sir, I trust that this union may be consummated, in order that British power on the continent may be consolidated, our connection with the Mother Country cemented and strengthened, and that under this union this country may be made a happy home for hundred of thousands of emigrants from the Mother Country—a happy and contented home for all now living here, and for our children and children's children for generations to come. (Hear, hear, and cheers.)

SPEECH BY MR. SHANLY, DELIVERED MARCH 10, 1865.

MR. SHANLY said—In rising to address the House on the great question under debate, it is not my intention to go minutely into the subject; for after all that has been said, and the great length to which the debate has dragged on, I cannot expect to be able to fix the attention of my hearers for very long, even were the subject one to which I could speak authoritatively, instead of being, as it is, one that the ablest and most statesmanlike among us must in a great measure accept upon faith—trusting to the future to develop the excellencies claimed for it on the one hand, or to establish the

faults that are charged on it on the other. But though I do not pretend to be able to say anything new on the subject, or to throw any light on the uncertain future that lies before us, still I would be unwilling that in, perhaps, the most important division ever taken in a Colonial Legislature, my vote should be recorded without my first stating some, at all events, of the reasons that actuate me in voting as I intend to vote. One feature has been strikingly observable in the debate, and that is, that from first to last, as far as it has yet gone, no new thing has been offered or suggested. The pro-

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gramme of Confederation stands now exactly as it was presented in a *quasi* private form to the representatives of the people of this country some four months ago. The promoters of the scheme have added nothing to, taken nothing from the original bill of fare, and they have as good as told us, frankly and squarely, that they would add nothing to, take nothing from it if they could. The opponents of the project on the other hand, while giving it a sweeping condemnation, offer nothing, suggest nothing to replace that which they so summarily reject. Nothing is easier than to find fault with other men's work; it is a talent that we all possess, and that few of us ever think to hide under a bushel. For myself, though in favor of the scheme, being equally at a loss with other honorable members to say anything new upon it, I, too, will have to turn my fault-finding instincts in the first instance. The honorable member for Montreal Centre (Hon. Mr. ROSE) has said in his able speech that if we could not improve on the project, we should forbear to find fault with it. I do not agree with him. On the contrary, I conceive that even though approving of the resolutions as a whole, it is the duty of members speaking to the question to point out and place on record the faults that strike them as likely to require correction by and by. And first of all—coming to discuss Confederation from my own standpoint—I would say that I have long looked forward to the time when the whole of the British North American Provinces would be united under one stable government; believing, as I always have believed ever since I came to know this country well, that we possess all the elements, in natural resources and endowments, and in distinctive geographical position, to form the ground-work of a power on this continent. I feared, nevertheless, when the project was foreshadowed here last year, that the time was not yet full for bringing about the desired combination. I feared that the almost total separation, political and social, which had heretofore existed between ourselves and the provinces below, might possibly cause a premature union to result in permanent estrangement. It appeared to me that we should first have cultivated social and commercial relations with our kindred on the seaboard before uniting, for better for worse, in a political alliance. These were the views which I took of the Confederation project when it was so suddenly sprung upon us at the close of last

session; and I confess that I still entertain grave apprehensions that we may be about to come together upon too short an acquaintance, before we have an opportunity of knowing one another, and learning to adapt ourselves the one to the other. In this consists my broad and general objection, not to the principle of Confederation, but to the hastiness with which it is sought to be carried out—threatening, as I fear, to mar our destiny in striving to overtake it. To the details of the scheme itself I hold one strong and marked objection, which I desire to record, though I know that this is not the time or place for remedying defective details. I allude to the Federal feature of the project. I own to a rooted dislike, if not to the Federal principle or Federal theory, at all events to the practical results of the working of the system; and neither the warm eulogium which the Hon. President of the Council (Hon. Mr. BROWN) has passed upon the system as illustrated by its working in the United States, nor the milder defence of the system pronounced by my hon. friend of the Hon. Minister of Agriculture (Hon. Mr. MCGEE), has served to clothe it in other than most distasteful colors in my sight. However the Federal system of government may have tended to promote the material growth of the United States—and it would not be safe to assert that such a country, with such a people, would have failed to attain to early greatness under any form of free government—however, I repeat, the Federal form of government may have promoted the material progress of the United States, it does not seem to me to have elevated, politically speaking at all events, the moral standard of the people of the United States. One most marked and evil result of the system has been to produce politicians rather than statesmen—swarms of the former to a very limited proportion of the latter; and I would much fear, if we are to see Canada redivided, that the petty parliaments of the separated provinces will prove to be but preparatory schools for that class of politicians who take to politics as to a trade, and whose after-presence in the greater Assembly—to which they would all aspire—would serve to depress the standard of political worth, to lower the tone of political morality, which we might hope to see prevail in a Confederated Parliament of British North America under a purely legislative union, which is the description of union into which I

trust to see the present imperfect Constitution, or proposed Constitution, eventually merge. For the reason stated I have looked upon this Federal scheme of union with dislike and distrust. But the promoters of the scheme, most of whom, it must be admitted, have appeared here rather as its apologists than its upholders, tell us that it is a necessity of circumstances, an unavoidable consequence of difference in language, laws and local interests between Upper and Lower Canada on the one part, and an absence of community of local interests between us here in Canada and the Maritime Provinces on the other hand. The latter part of the argument is undoubtedly correct; but, admitting the whole of the premises, for argument sake, the other question naturally suggests itself: Is Confederation, even in the faulty form in which it is laid before us, to be accepted as a likely remedy for the evils under which we now labor in Canada, and as a possible antidote against the greater evils which threaten us in the near future? I would answer that question in my own way, and from my own point of view by and by; meanwhile I would ask to be permitted to say a word in respect of the financial phase of the Confederation project; and upon that point I feel it difficult to agree with my hon. friend the Hon. Finance Minister, in assuming that the joint expenses of the two local governments here in Canada may be kept so much below what we are now paying for our single form of government, as to leave a wide margin towards defraying, if not wholly to cover, our proportion of the expenses of the General Government. I can hardly venture to take such a *couleur-de-rose* view of our position as that. I will not weary the House with estimates and figures, which, after all, can be but problematical and conjectural; but I would venture to predict that under our new condition of existence, with its *quasi* national obligations, our expenditure must increase largely beyond the limits that we have hitherto been accustomed to. I believe that to be an inevitable result of the Confederation; but I also believe that there is a future looming upon us—Confederation or no Confederation—which will involve us in duties and responsibilities which we must not shirk—which, in fact, we cannot shirk if we would. The signs of the times are not to be mistaken, and I fear we have an expensive future before us for some time to come.

But if, in bringing about a union of all these provinces, we were in reality laying the sure foundation of social, commercial, and political prosperity—if we felt that in reality we were laying the ground-work, as it were, of a new nation on this continent—we might justly, along with the great benefits we bequeath to posterity—benefits which we, in our generation, cannot hope to enjoy in their fulness—bequeath to them also the financial burden which would seem to be the ordained and inevitable accompaniment of progressive nationality. And if I felt assured in my own mind that this measure of Confederation, faulty as it is, promised even a fair chance for successfully solving a great political difficulty, I for one would not fear to take my share of the responsibility of increasing the expenses of government and adding to the debt of the country. I have alluded to the expenses attendant on Confederation as being, to a certain extent, conjectural and problematical; but there is one item of its cost which is not of that character. The Intercolonial Railway is a vital part of the Confederation project—the latter could have no useful, practical existence without the former. As a commercial undertaking, the Intercolonial Railway presents no attractions, it offers no material for a flattering prospectus; we could not invite to it the attention of European capitalists as presenting an eligible investment for their surplus funds. But for the establishing of those intimate social and commercial relations indispensable to political unity between ourselves and the sister provinces, the railway is a necessity. It will, therefore, have to be undertaken and paid for purely as a national work, and it is right that the people of Canada should know and understand in the outset what the probable addition to our public debt would be in connection with the 68th resolution. I do not think the proportion of the cost of the railway falling to the share of Canada can be much short of what we have already given towards the construction of the Grand Trunk Railway—at all events from twelve to fourteen millions of dollars. If it shall come about that the sense of the people is to be taken on the Confederation question, the Intercolonial Railway feature in the plan will prove the most difficult to reconcile the people to, and especially the people of Upper Canada. In my own constituency—and I may venture to assert that there are not many hon. members in the House stronger in their constituencies than

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I am—if I were to come before my electors purely on the Confederation issue, and as the advocate of Confederacy, I know that denunciation of the 68th resolution would be a tower of strength in the hands of any anti-Confederate opponent who might choose to measure swords with me in the electoral field; but I would be prepared to face that difficulty, and in the fullest confidence that I could do so successfully and triumphantly, if satisfied that I could—and I think I could—show to my people that the scheme of Confederation, even with the Intercolonial Railway inseparably interwoven in its web, is essential to our existence as a British people. (Hear, hear.) Reverting to the objectionable features I have alluded to in the resolutions before us, I have asked myself this question—Is Confederation, as offered to us, faulty, as the plan may be likely to work well for the future of the country? Is it likely to prove a satisfactory solution of the very grave political difficulties that beset us? It would be in vain to attempt to conceal from ourselves that Canada is at this moment approaching the most critical period of her hitherto existence. Threatened with aggression from without, we are not in a gratifying condition of prosperity within, let blue-books and census returns say what they will to the contrary. Great and momentous events are transpiring just beyond our frontier—events which have already seriously and injuriously affected us commercially, and which must inevitably, in some way or other, affect us politically. A people until recently devoted only to industrial pursuits and the development of their country, have suddenly expanded into a great military power. To use their own expression, the Americans are “making history very fast,” and it is impossible that that eventful history can be manufactured in a territory separated from our own by little more than an imaginary line, without our having eventually some part in its pages, for good or for evil. In fact we cannot conceal from ourselves that some great change is impending over the destinies of our country—a change that will present itself to us in some form or other, and that before long, without its being in our power to avert, though it may be in our power to shape it. There is fast growing up in England a feeling of want of confidence in Canada. We see it in the tone of the press, in the parliamentary debates and elsewhere. We are told that we are giving more trouble to the

Mother Country than we are worth. A similar feeling of want of confidence, amounting, almost to contempt, has always prevailed towards us in the United States. The ignorance of everything relating to Canada—of our political and social condition—of our resources and our commerce—our growth and our progress—that exists among our kindred across the border, cannot fail to have surprised those who have mingled much among them, and if not altogether creditable to them is certainly very humiliating to us; but, great as the ignorance is there, it is fully equalled by that which exists with respect to Canada, and all pertaining to Canada, among our nearer and dearer kindred in the old world. What can we do to remedy this unfortunate and humiliating state of things? What can we do to inspire confidence in us abroad; to command respect; to defy contempt? These appear to me to be the practical questions with which we have to deal. We are plainly told by England that we must rely more upon our own resources in the future than we have done in the past, and it is right and just we should do so. It appears to me that there are just three states of political existence possible for us here, when we emerge from the chrysalis-form in which we have hitherto existed. First, there is the attempt to stand alone as a separate nationality on this continent—that is one alternative. Secondly, there is the prospect held out to us in the resolutions—namely, a union of all the British North American Colonies, under the flag of England, becoming more and more every year a homogeneous British people, and building up a consolidated British power on this continent. The last and inevitable alternative, if we reject the other two, is exactly that stated by my honorable friend from South Lanark (Mr. MORRIS)—absorption into the United States. It is in vain to shut our eyes to that fact, or that the time is at hand when we will have to make our selection. I know that the latter alternative—and I can speak from as thorough an acquaintance with the wants, feelings and wishes of the people of Canada as any honorable gentleman in this House possesses—would be most distasteful to the great mass of the people of this country. (Loud Cheers.) To myself personally, it would be so distasteful that it would amount to a sentence of expatriation, rupturing the ties and associations of a quarter of a century. (Hear, hear.) When my

honorable friend the Hon. Attorney General for Upper Canada introduced the resolutions to the House, he gave us to understand that the question, or the details of the question, were scarcely to be considered as open for debate. He told us plainly and squarely that the project must be viewed as a treaty already sealed and signed between the contracting parties, and would have to be accepted as a whole or rejected as a whole. I felt the force of the situation then, and when the same honorable gentleman came down here a few days since, and, in reference to the new phase of difficulty resulting from the turn taken by the elections in New Brunswick, announced that prompt and vigorous action was necessary, in a somewhat different direction from that originally contemplated, I felt the force of the situation even more fully than at first. (Hear, hear.) And I would here ask to be allowed to digress a moment from the main question. I wish to take this opportunity of saying that I never had more than a sort of a half-confidence in the Government as now constituted. When the leaders of the Conservative party, with whom I have always acted, saw fit last year to make certain political combinations which, even they must admit, astonished and startled the country—combinations resulting in the present Coalition Ministry—I claimed that I and every member of the Conservative party, in this House or out of it, who chose to dissent from the course adopted by our leaders, had a right to hold ourselves absolved from all party ties and obligations whatever. I claimed then as I claim now, that from thenceforward I owed no political allegiance, no party fealty, to any man or any body of men on the floor of this House. In electing to adopt for myself the anomalous and hybrid position of an "independent member," I knew full well that it was to "burn my ship"—to cast away from me all chances of political advancement; but I never had political aspirations that warred with my own notions of political honor and consistency, or with my love of personal independence. But when great changes in our political relations are taking place; when all feel, as I believe all do feel, that a great and momentous event is impending; when, under such circumstances, my hon. friend the Honorable Attorney General for Upper Canada announces, as he has done, in a frank, bold, manly and statesmanlike manner, prompt and vigorous policy on the part of the Government in dealing with an

unlooked-for difficulty—I allude to the difficulty growing out of the New Brunswick elections—I will tell that hon. gentleman that he and his colleagues may now—and always when boldly grappling with the political emergencies of the country—count on a cordial, earnest and admiring support from me. (Hear, hear.) Without further discussion or debate, I cast my vote for and my lot with the Confederation, and this I do in the fullest confidence and belief that, however faulty may be certain of the details of the scheme, and however awkward it may be to work out some of its provisions successfully, the resources of the people of these provinces, their innate adaptation for self-government, will be found fully equal to overcoming all the difficulties and obstacles that may beset their path. I fully believe that the faults which I now object to in the plan of Confederation will, like the diseases incident to childhood, grow out of our system as we advance in political strength and stature, and that when another decade has passed over us we will be found a strong, united British people, ready and able, in peace or in war, to hold our own upon this continent. (Cheers.)

It being six o'clock, the Speaker left the chair.

After the recess,
MR. SHANLY, resuming his remarks, said—Before the House rose, I had expressed my belief that the people of this country would be found equal to any emergency that might arise in working out the Constitution embraced in the resolutions, and would prove themselves capable of altering or amending it until it worked effectually and well for the benefit of the whole country. And in making the choice which I know the people of this country will make—as between annexation to the United States and connection with Great Britain—as between republicanism and monarchy—as between Canada our country, or Canada our state—I believe they will be choosing that which will best advance the material prospects, and best ensure the future happiness and greatness of the country. If we were to be absorbed into the Republic, and become a state of the Union, that would in no way relieve us of the great undertakings that are before us for the improvement and development of our resources. We would still have a large debt on our hands, of which, unaided, we would have to bear the burden; our canals and other public works

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would be treated, not as national, but as state enterprises, and the expense of enlarging or extending them would have to be charged upon a diminished revenue, for nearly the whole of the revenue we now raise from customs and excise would go, not to the improvement of this state of Canada, but would be poured into the coffers of the General Government at Washington. I can not understand how any patriotic Canadian, even of those who regard political matters from a material point of view only, can advocate annexation to the United States. I believe there are many persons in Canada who, though entertaining feelings of true loyalty to the Crown of England, imagine that in some way or other—they cannot exactly tell how—annexation would bring about an extraordinary and sudden state of prosperity. I differ entirely, even in the material and practical points of view, from the theorists and visionaries who entertain so false a conviction. How, I would ask, is this country, with diminished means at its command, to be enabled to carry out those great works through which alone it could hope to become great, but the ways and means for constructing or improving which still puzzle our financiers? I have always been of opinion, since I first came to ponder carefully the future of Canada, that that future does not depend so much upon our lands as upon our waters. The land—the *terra firma*—of Canada is not inviting to those who have tilled the soil of Great Britain or explored the vast fertile plains to the west of Lake Michigan. Our country is just on a par with the northern part of the State of New York, and with the States of Vermont and New Hampshire in respect of climatic conditions and conditions of soil. But we possess one immense advantage over those countries, an advantage which gives us a distinctive position on this continent—the possession of the noble river which flows at our feet. It is through that river and our great chain of inland waters that the destiny of this country is to be worked out. But we cannot fulfil our destiny—or the destiny of this country rather—by standing idle in the market place; by, as one hon. member has suggested, doing nothing to improve our natural highways or create artificial ones, trusting to fortune or to Providence for the development of our resources. I believe that we have a high and honorable destiny before us, but that it has to be worked out by hard toil and large expenditure; and

we certainly would not be in a better condition to work it out were we to be united to a country that would at once absorb four-fifths of the revenue on which we now depend for our very existence. The improvement of our internal navigation is the first great undertaking we should consider, whether for commercial purposes or for purposes of defence. And as regards the promoting of our commercial interest in the improvement of our navigation, what advantage, I would ask, could we expect to gain by becoming a state of the American union? There is not one of the seaboard states but would be in every way interested in diverting the western trade from our into their own channels, and in endeavoring to obstruct the improvements calculated to attract that trade to the St. Lawrence. The Western States, doubtless, would have interests in common with us, but they are not in a position to render us material aid for the construction of our works, being themselves borrowers for the means of carrying out their own internal improvements. I believe, then, that even from a material point of view, every unprejudiced thinker must admit that our future prosperity and importance lie in preserving our individuality, and in making the most of our heritage for our own special advancement. (Hear, hear.) I feel quite certain that nine-tenths of the people of Canada would not be deterred from taking their chance as a nation through the fear that they may some day have to strike a blow in defence of their country; and of all else, whether of reality or of sentiment, that should be dear to a brave and loyal people. We stand here the envied possessors of, take it all in all, the greatest river in the world; the keepers of one of the great portals to the Atlantic; and I trust that Canadians will never be found to yield possession of their heritage till wrested from them by force! And that must be a force, they may rest assured, not merely sufficient to over-match the people of these provinces, but all the power of the Empire besides. (Hear, hear.) Now, though I have said I would not enter into details, I must claim the attention of the House for a few moments longer, while I touch upon one very important point. I refer to the 69th resolution, foreshadowing the colonizing by Canada, and at the expense of Canada, of the North-West territory. There is not in this House one hon. member who appreciates more fully than I do the great natural resources and great future value of

that territory ; but I am not of that class of sanguine and visionary politicians who would risk losing all by grasping too much, and in the vast dominion extending from Lake Superior to the shores of Newfoundland, the Confederacy will have ample scope for the energy and enterprise of her people for a long time to come. The North-West territory, from its geographical position as regards us, is very difficult of access. A broad tract of barren and inhospitable country intervenes between Lake Superior and the fertile plains of the Red River and the Saskatchewan, which for seven months out of the twelve are, in fact, wholly inaccessible to us save through a foreign country, rendering it next to impossible for us alone to effect close connection with and colonization of that country. We cannot jump all at once from the position of colonists to that of colonizers. That great territory can only be developed, colonized and preserved to us by the exercise of that fostering care which the Empire has ever bestowed upon her colonies in their infancy. The Hon. President of the Council (Hon. Mr. BROWN), in the course of the debate, said he hoped to see the day when our young men would go forth from among us to settle the North-West territory. I harbor no such wish. On the contrary, one of the fondest hopes I cherish as a result of Confederation is, that it will so attract capital and enterprise to the provinces, so tend to develop our internal resources, as to offer to the youth of the country a field for the exercise of that laudable energy and ambition which now cause so many of them to leave their own hearths and cast their lot with strangers. One of the greatest ills that Canada now suffers from is, that the young men born and brought up in her midst look abroad for their future, and bestow their energies and talents on another land ; and, although an immigrant myself, I know and admit that a man born and brought up here is worth any two immigrants for the arduous task of clearing and settling what remains to us of the public domain. I hope and trust that the Confederation of the Provinces will create sufficient inducements to keep the young men of the country at home. (Hear, hear.) It is in that hope that I support the measure. I trust at the same time that the great North-West territory will be preserved to our flag, and that, fostered by the Mother Country, it will in

time become great and populous, and finally extend the British American nation to the shores of the Pacific. It would be unfair, at this late stage of the debate, to enter further into details. I promised that I would not do so. With details, indeed, it has all along appeared to me we had little to do now. If the project as a whole be good, surely means will be found, as we go on, to remedy objectionable details. With all its defects—and I admit there are many defects—there never was a written Constitution but had its defects—I feel confident that the general design set forth in the resolutions meets with the approval of a large majority of the people of Canada at all events ; and it would be an insult to the sound common sense of a people that have so long proved themselves capable of judging for themselves and of governing themselves, to suppose them incapable of adjusting, from time to time, as occasion arises, the minor details or defects of a system of government to which they have resolved on according a fair trial. (Hear, hear.) And now, Mr. SPEAKER, what I had to say on this important subject of Confederation I have said. I promised that I would not weary the House by entering into details ; I trust that I have not done so ; but I may be permitted to express a hope—a hope founded in a deep and abiding belief—that the people of these provinces are and will prove themselves equal to the great undertaking that is before them ; that aided by all the commercial power of Britain in time of peace, by all her military and maritime power in war, should war unhappily come about, we will show to the world that we are not unworthy scions of the noble races of which we come, but that we are competent to successfully work out to a great end the task that is intrusted to us—the noblest and worthiest task that can be intrusted to an intelligent and enlightened people—that of making for themselves a name and a place among the nations of the earth ; that of building up—to borrow a quotation aptly introduced into his able speech by my hon. friend from South Lanark—a quotation from the speech of a renowned British statesman, when speaking on a great colonial question—that of building up “one of those great monuments with which England marks the records of her deeds—not pyramids and obelisks, but states and commonwealths, whose history shall be written in her language.” (Cheers.)

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